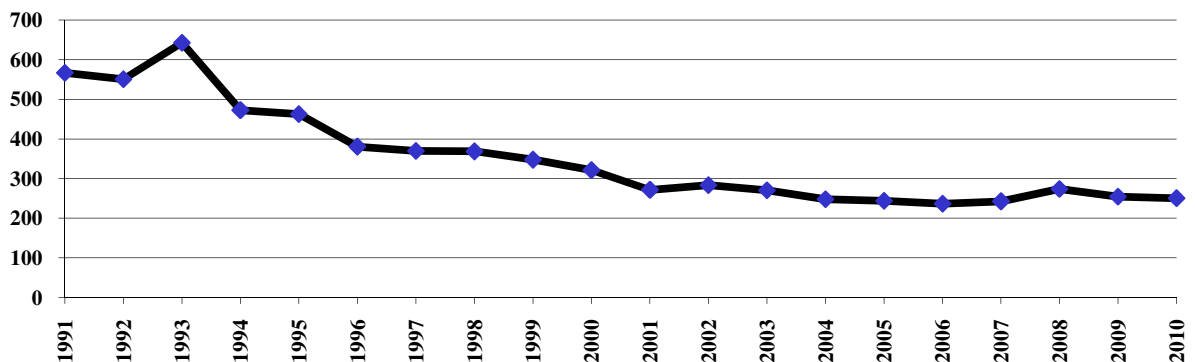


# AGGRAVATED ASSAULT

Aggravated assault describes an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault is usually accompanied by the use of a weapon or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm. Attempts are included since it is not necessary that injury result when a gun, knife, or other weapon is used that could result in serious personal injury if the crime were successfully completed.

**Twenty Year Review:  
Aggravated Assault in Cambridge, 1991-2010**



**255 reported in 2009 • 251 reported in 2010**

Analysis of the past twenty years shows that aggravated assault reached its peak in the early 1990's. Between 1984 and 1989, Cambridge registered about 350 incidents per year; in 1990, it suddenly jumped by 41% to an unprecedented 614 reports. It peaked at 643 in 1993 and then steadily declined for the next 10 years. Within the last 10 years, aggravated assaults have leveled off to an average of 258, a 43% decrease from the previous 10 years.

Assault is a violent crime that typically arises in "the heat of the moment." Unlike the crime of robbery, assault seldom involves a motivation of personal gain. Offenders in aggravated assaults will often regret the incident subsequent to its occurrence, as the offender typically knows his or her victim.

## GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS FROM 2008 TO 2010

NEIGHBORHOOD	2008	2009	2010
Area 4	45	32	46
Cambridgeport	38	38	43
Inman/Harrington	24	33	29
Riverside	25	21	25
East Cambridge	31	32	24
North Cambridge	33	29	23
West Cambridge	18	15	21
Mid-Cambridge	26	21	19
Peabody	15	13	8
Agassiz	7	8	5
Strawberry Hill	6	7	4
M.I.T. Area	2	4	3
Cambridge Highlands	4	2	1
	<b>274</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>251</b>

Aggravated assault is a very serious crime and is not taken lightly by the Cambridge Police. The severity of aggravated assault lies in the serious injury caused to victims, which can range from bruises to knife or gun wounds. Approximately 4% of the aggravated assaults in 2010 resulted in serious to life-threatening injuries, most of which involved a stabbing or shooting. Roughly 37% of the 251 incidents resulted in no injury, as the victim showed no sign or complaint of injury or was merely threatened with the use of a weapon (gun, knife, shod foot, household item, baseball bat, etc).

## **IN FOCUS: DOMESTIC ASSAULTS**

A good portion of the fluctuation in the rate of incidents can be attributed to the frequency in which the crime is *reported* rather than the frequency of its actual occurrence. One area with a historically low reporting rate is domestic assault. As domestic violence awareness has increased over the last decade, so has the willingness of domestic violence victims to report abuse to the police. Over a third of the aggravated assaults in 2010 were domestic incidents. Over the past five years, the rate of domestic incidents has ranged from a quarter to just over a third of all reported incidents.

Despite advances made by domestic violence victim advocates in recent years, experts estimate that between 60% and 80% of domestic assaults are never reported to the police. However, lack of reporting is not unique to domestic incidents. It is very likely that factors including apathy, fear of police contact, embarrassment, and other issues lead to underreporting of various assaults involving acquaintances, gangs, and conflicts among the homeless. Due to the estimated high rate of underreporting, *assault statistics must be viewed with extreme care.*

Since domestic assaults and assaults among acquaintances dominate the percentages (aside from stranger assaults), it should be noted that the crime naturally registers higher in areas that have a high residential population. These neighborhoods include East Cambridge, Inman, Area 4, Cambridgeport, and North Cambridge. Domestic assaults and other domestic crimes are reviewed in the *Domestic Crimes* section of this report.

## **Relationships**

Another way to look at aggravated assaults is to classify the relationship between the offender and the victim. Many, but not all, of the assault categorizations are based on this relationship. This list shows the relationship between the offender and the victim in the 251 aggravated assaults in 2010:

<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%*</b>
Stranger	84	33%
Acquaintance	50	20%
Romantic Partner	33	13%
Parent/Child	18	7%
Client/Patron	12	5%
Ex-Romantic Partner	12	5%
Spouse	12	5%
Sibling	8	3%
Co-Worker/Employee	6	2%
Schoolmate	5	2%
Other Family	3	1%
Roommate	3	1%
Third Lover	2	1%
Neighbor	2	1%
Landlord/Tenant	1	0%
Teacher/Coach	0	0%

\*Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS AND TRENDS OBSERVED IN 2010**

The following is a synopsis of neighborhoods with concentrations of particular aggravated assault categories as well as detailed accounts of some of the most serious incidents of the year (not including domestic incidents).

### **• NEIGHBORHOODS:**

- After experiencing the most substantial decrease in 2009, **Area 4** rose back to its 2008 level this year, increasing by 44% from 32 incidents in 2009 to 46 incidents in 2010. Meanwhile, East Cambridge sustained the most notable decrease in 2010, dropping 25% from 32 incidents to 24. Nine of the thirteen neighborhoods experienced reductions in aggravated assaults this year.
- In most years, **Cambridgeport** is the top area for bar and alcohol related incidents due to the high density of foot traffic around restaurants, bars, and nightclubs in the Mass Ave area of Central Square. However, in 2010, not a single bar/alcohol related aggravated assault was reported in Cambridgeport. Bars in **Harvard Square (West Cambridge)** and **Porter Square (North Cambridge)** experienced the most incidents of this type in 2010.
- **Area 4** experienced the most juvenile/gang-related assaults in 2010 with five incidents, followed by **Cambridgeport** with four. Similar to previous years, over half of the juvenile incidents citywide in 2010 involved the use of a knife or handgun.

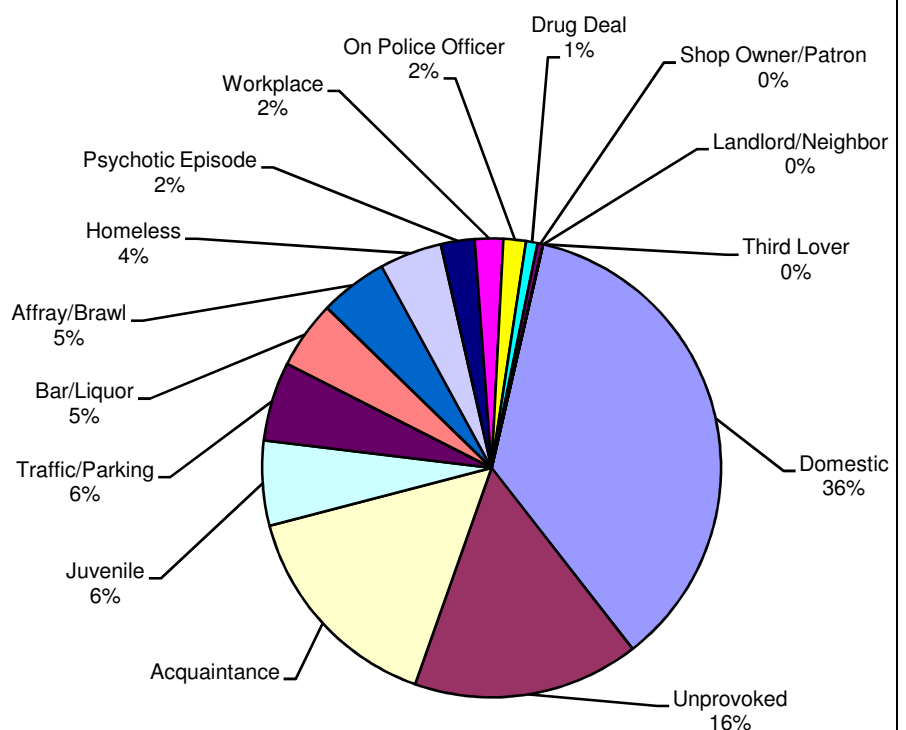
- Aggravated assault incidents involving homeless individuals in Cambridge rose from seven incidents in 2009 to eleven in 2010. A majority of the 2010 incidents took place in **Central Square**, where there is a large homeless population. The typical homeless incident usually involves homeless-on-homeless assaults, often among acquainted individuals.
- Unprovoked incidents were highest in **Cambridgeport** (11 incidents) and **Area 4** (10 incidents). No established patterns of unprovoked assaults emerged anywhere in the City this year.
- Four of the aggravated assaults in 2010 were shooting incidents, none of which were fatal. The following examples represent three of the more serious non-fatal shootings of the year.
  - A Quincy man was shot multiple times while walking on Jackson St one evening in late January. Two males were arrested in connection with this incident in February.
  - A Cambridge male was shot during a drug deal on Columbia St in mid-February. Another Cambridge male was arrested for this shooting in March.
  - A Cambridge male was shot in the neck while walking on Bishop Allen Dr very early one morning in late July. The victim survived the assault, but no arrests have been made and the incident remains under investigation.
- Nine people were arrested in 2010 for firearm offenses in Cambridge. Some of these offenses included possession of a large capacity firearm, carrying a loaded firearm, carrying ammunition without an FID card, and discharging a firearm within 500ft of a building. Six of the arrested individuals were Cambridge residents. The others were from Roxbury, Somerville, and Woburn.
- See page 36 for a map of all aggravated assaults in 2009 and 2010 in which a handgun was used or threatened.

**Protect yourself!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 136 for tips on how you can protect against becoming a victim of assault, and what do in case of an assault or abuse.**

## AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CLASSIFICATIONS

**Classification Percent of Aggravated Assaults, 2010**

TYPE	2009	2010	% of total*
Domestic	79	90	36%
Unprovoked	47	40	16%
Acquaintance	38	39	16%
Juvenile	24	15	6%
Traffic/Parking	24	14	6%
Bar/Liquor	11	12	5%
Affray/Brawl	7	12	5%
Homeless	7	11	4%
Psychotic Episode	2	6	2%
Workplace	5	5	2%
On Police Officer	6	4	2%
Drug Deal	1	2	1%
Shop Owner/Patron	1	1	0%
Landlord/Neighbor	2	0	0%
Third Lover	1	0	0%
*Total may not equal 100% due to rounding.			



# SIMPLE ASSAULT

**457 reported in 2009 • 415 reported in 2010**

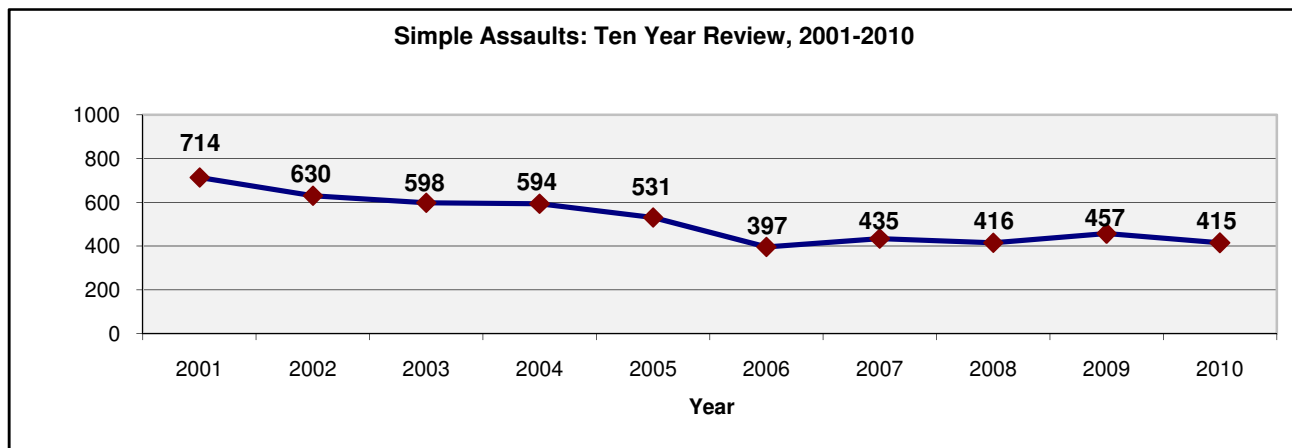
SIMPLE ASSAULT CATEGORIZATION			
Categorization	2009	2010	% Change 09-10
Domestic	170	167	-2%
Acquaintance	88	69	-22%
Unprovoked	81	61	-25%
Traffic/Parking	30	27	-10%
Bar/Alcohol	19	31	+63%
Workplace	17	16	-6%
Juvenile/Gang	14	9	-36%
Homeless	11	6	-45%
Landlord/Neighbor	10	5	-50%
On Police Officer	7	12	+71%
Shop Owner/Patron	6	8	+33%
Psychotic Episode	3	4	+33%
Third Lover	1	0	-100%
Blitz	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>-9%</b>

Simple assaults, unlike aggravated assaults, are not scored among the Part I Crimes (Index Crimes). They do not involve the use of a dangerous weapon and do not cause serious injury. Examples of simple assault include a shove, a punch in the stomach, or a slap in the face.

On average, Cambridge reports between 400 and 600 simple assault incidents annually. During the past year, 415 simple assaults were reported to the Cambridge Police Department. This number represents a 9% decrease from the 457 incidents reported in 2009 and is 22% below the 10-year average of 533. However, because most simple assaults result in minimal or no injury, the victims and offenders may sometimes dismiss them as inconsequential. Therefore, lack of reporting is a problem in calculating exact numbers of simple assaults.

Similar to aggravated assaults, domestic incidents typically make up the highest percent of reported simple assaults. In 2010, domestic incidents accounted for 40% of the simple assaults. Assaults among acquaintances and unprovoked incidents accounted for approximately 17% and 15% of the assaults, respectively.

Cambridgeport reported the most simple assault activity in 2010 with 58 incidents, followed by Area 4 with 56, East Cambridge with 48, and Riverside with 47. Bar/alcohol related incidents and homeless assaults were mainly concentrated in the Central and Harvard Square areas. The other simple assault categories broke down more evenly across neighborhoods.



## WHERE ASSAULTS TAKE PLACE...

Many assaults take place in the home, particularly family, roommate, or acquaintance-related incidents. Assaults taking place on the street are typically the most common, as these involve domestic disputes as well as arguments that may begin in a commercial establishment and spill onto the street. Restaurant/Bar incidents are also frequent and can be the result of intoxicated parties becoming disorderly and sometimes violent. Aggravated assaults on school grounds have not significantly increased over the past five years, basically making up between 1 and 2% of all aggravated assaults. While many juvenile simple assaults take place on school grounds, the more violent aggravated assaults take place on the street in the proximity of residential housing and parks.

# Aggravated Assaults Involving Handguns, 2009-2010

